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# The Rokita Report

## Office of Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita



### From the desk of Secretary Rokita

Indiana, like other states, redraws its House and Senate district boundaries every 10 years based on data from the federal census - otherwise known as redistricting. The main objective of the redistricting process is to ensure there is an equal balance of representatives who can sufficiently stand for their constituents in the democratic process.

Additionally, redistricting is aimed at creating a fair competition, allowing voters to choose the candidate who they believe will best represent their ideas in government. Instead, the current redistricting process is being driven by politics. Because politics is sitting in the driver's seat, disproportional lines based on political data are being created, helping to guarantee one political party's candidates are elected as frequently as possible.

Recently, I sent a letter to each of the 254 legislative candidates running for a seat in the Indiana General Assembly. The letter encourages each of them to commit to redistricting reform. Also, the letter asks them to put their duties to the people of Indiana before their political buddies and parties. Most importantly, I asked them to let Hoosiers know where they stand on this important issue before we go to the polls on November 2. In order to give them a starting point to effectively reform redistricting, the letter included five ideas I believe can produce real reform.

First, keep communities of interest together. This characteristic seeks to avoid unnecessary division of voters who share the same community and often the same priorities, views and motivations. Second, create more compact and geographically uniform districts. More than an aesthetic preference, this action would improve government accessibility and raise constituents' awareness of their district and its distinct, local issues of concern. Third, reduce voters' confusion about who represents them by following already existing political boundaries such as county and township lines. Fourth, not use any political data including incumbent addresses for partisan reasons. Maps created without political data will be inherently more fair and less likely to contribute to gerrymandering, along with other types of voter manipulation. Finally, "nest" two house districts under the existing lines of a senate district. This would result in even more accountability and further lessen confusion about who represents you.

### SOS ALERT!

Sign the [Rethinking Redistricting Facebook petition](#) today! If you support the creation of legislative boundaries based on already existing township and county boundaries along with keeping communities of interest the same, and not based on political data then click the "Like" button to sign the [Rethinking Redistricting Facebook Petition](#) today!

### — Quick Pic



Monticello Fire Chief Shane Swaim salutes during the playing of taps at the city's 9/11 Annual Commemorative Ceremony, where Secretary Rokita gave the keynote address.

### In the News

[Election 2010: DRAWING BATTLE LINES](#)

[Decade of policy at stake in election](#)

These are reasonable concepts I am submitting to be considered by each candidate. These concepts are also not my original thoughts; rather methods currently adopted by several other states and ideas from the most important body of minds - Hoosiers.

During my travels throughout the state, voters and taxpayers at every turn told me they expect those sent to the Indiana State Capitol building to draw new districts that don't needlessly split their county or township down the middle nor into a dozen pieces. They expect their elected leaders to create more compact districts, not districts resembling dragons, snakes, or barnyard animals. The voters and taxpayers expect if redistricting is done properly, it will lead to more competitive elections with the ultimate purpose of making lawmakers more accountable.

[Truth Editorial: State website links you to your elected officials](#)

[Murry makes \\$50,000 in restitution plea deal](#)

[Rokita slams ISTA funding of candidates](#)

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However, it will take more than a letter from me or even a comment from you to make our future state legislators take notice. We need to show a true groundswell of support and show our strength in numbers. One way you can start to be a part of meaningful redistricting reform is visiting [www.RethinkingRedistricting.com](http://www.RethinkingRedistricting.com) and clicking the [Facebook petition](#) "Like" button. The goal is to get hundreds of Hoosiers showing their support before the November 2 election.

So, the next time a candidate is standing on your front steps, giving you their "stump" speech, listen to see if they mention redistricting. Yet, if my hunch is wrong and you don't get a knock on your door, or see legislative candidates out working for your vote this November, think about what that means. Chances are it means you live in a district that's been so "well drawn" using political information like your voting history, the outcome of the race in your district is already been decided without your vote.

It shouldn't be that way and it doesn't have to be. But for better, more effective districts to be drawn in 2011, the time to speak up is now.

### **Indiana first state to launch website providing complete list of elected officials**

*['Who Are Your Elected Officials'](#) enables Hoosiers to learn exactly who represents them in every office from federal to local levels*

Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita recently announced the release of a new online tool allowing Hoosiers to view the names and responsibilities of each of their elected officials across federal, state and local government. "[Who Are Your Elected Officials](#)," is the first of its kind in the nation and supplies voters with a unique reference tool, accessing a comprehensive database showing the names, and in many cases contact information, of all federal, state, county and local officials elected to serve as well as their specific duties.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

### **New mobile online voter registration aims to meet needs of today's voters**

Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita recently announced a new mobile tool for online voter registration. The online registration mobile tool, accessed when [www.in.gov/sos](http://www.in.gov/sos) is viewed through an internet-enabled cell phone, increases convenience for today's voter while giving individuals another opportunity to meet the Oct. 4 voter registration deadline.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

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## Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita accepts award from Indiana Council for Economic Education

Recently, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita received the Indiana Council for Economic Education's (ICEE) 2010 Paul Samuelson Enterprise Award for Community Leaders.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

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